



Cameroon

Programme for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Cameroon, South-West Region, Phase IV

A Development program of the Republic of Cameroon, co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through KFW

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Background information on PSMNR-SWR Phase IV

The Programme for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Cameroon, South West Region Phase IV is a development programme of the Republic of Cameroon, co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW Development Bank. Phases I – III of PSMNR ran from 2006 to 2017 (12 years), with Phase IV officially starting start in June 2018 for a planned duration of four years.

The purpose of the programme, which has been maintained from the first phases since 2006, is the “sustainable forest and wildlife management by affected stakeholders in and around targeted protected areas for their benefit, with special emphasis on the poorer segments of the local populations”. This is to contribute towards the preservation of high-value ecosystems in the South-West Region of Cameroon, thereby sustainably contributing to improved livelihoods of the surrounding communities. The approach to be pursued shall combine – in a coordinated manner – conservation measures, sustainable use of natural resources and integrated livelihood support towards target communities and groups. Trends of key species populations and maintenance of ecologically intact forest cover in the targeted Protected Areas (PAs) and important wildlife corridors have been identified as key indicators for measuring the effective achievement of the Program’s overall objective.

The project activities are organised under the following results:

- Result 1: Management and valorisation of forest resources is contributing to the sustainable development of peripheral zones of protected areas and targeted corridors;
- Result 2: Integrated landscape management around protected areas is enhanced;
- Result 3: Effective collaborative management of protected areas is assured;
- Result 4: Integrity of ecosystems is ensured and monitored;
- Result 5: Sustainable financial mechanisms for protected area management are developed and implemented;
- Result 6: The programme is managed and coordinated effectively.

Within the institutional set up of the programme, the Regional Delegate (RD) for the South-West Region assisted by the programme consultant GFA-DFS is in charge of the programme coordination. Actual implementation on site concentrates on the National Park Services and the respective Technical Operation Units (TOU), the Forest Management Units (FMUs), council and community forests. In the National Park Services, the non-governmental organizations Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) collaborate in the implementation of a collaborative management approach in collaboration with Local Support Organizations (LSOs).

The intervention area of PSMNR-SWR covers four National Parks and one Wildlife Sanctuary scattered across the SWR. Those are the Mount Cameroon National Park (MCNP), Korup National Park (KNP), Takamanda National Park (TNP), Bakossi National Park (BNP) and the Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS). The programme is also intervening in FMUs, the planned council forests, forest reserves which have been transferred to councils, community forests and wildlife corridors between the protected areas in order to promote an integrated landscape intervention.

The fourth phase of PSMNR is guided by the objective of consolidating and capitalizing on concepts and interventions, in particular of the collaborative management of Protected Areas. During the previous phases, Conservation Development Agreements (CDAs) have been signed between Park services and individual communities adjacent of the Protected Areas (PAs). In this phase, such negotiations will be conducted at cluster level to **streamline the co-management intervention and ease its institutionalisation** through legally recognised planning documents: PAs management plan and council development plans. PSMNR-SWR IV will consolidate the role of local partner NGOs by associating them to a specific cluster in order take over certain aspects of the co-management intervention. Concurrently, PSMNR-SWR IV supports further delegation

of management responsibilities to village forest management committees and other local institutions.

Over the last phases, remarkable progresses have been realised concerning the livelihood of adjacent populations of the PAs, as well as the relationship between the population and the park services. However poaching and unsustainable use of the resources of the PAs remains a challenge. During the fourth Phase IV, PSMNR will further **target hotspot villages and professional hunters** through intensive dialogue and integrated livelihood support that can change their behaviour towards conservation. Concurrently with the targeted intervention, PSMNR will pursue its support to other communities already engaged in the CDA with mainly the **consolidation around few successful IGA projects** from previous phases, such as intervention on cocoa, cassava, and plantain farmers as well as NTFP collectors. Collective behavioural changes towards biodiversity conservation requires the introduction of **stronger conditions and sanctions** within the collaborative management approach. Modalities of implementation of the CDA and associated incentives have to be linked to specific and measurable conservation objectives. It has to be backed up by regular monitoring of the performance and application of agreed sanctions. Therefore, without an **effective law enforcement** system, the co-management strategy will not be successful in preserving the wildlife populations of key species of this area.

The proposed measures to reduce poaching for Phase IV included the creation and operation of **a centralised Conservation Task Force**, to improve efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement operations, integrated into the MINFOF set up in collaboration with the Protected Area's services.

Communication and conservation education are a key components which have not been sufficiently addressed during the previous phases. It is intended to target local communities living in/around PAs and promote broad sensitization of the youths, target forest user groups, village community members on environmental education as well as biodiversity conservation and other related themes. The conservation education outreach program will be mainstreamed through the co-management institutions (cluster platforms and VFMCs) together with local NGOs and cluster facilitators.

The achievement of the programme objectives requires as well an **integrated approach at the landscape level and coordinated interventions** with other Ministries, principally MINEPAT, MINADER and MINEPDED, decentralised structures and development institutions. The intervention logic is therefore integrating protected area management in a landscape approach. It includes the work on corridor management, transboundary conservation with Nigeria through the creation and management of MAB transboundary biosphere reserves, the management of wider conservation areas including forest concessions, community and council forests. The "Man and Biosphere (MAB)" transboundary process is an opportunity to provide a cooperation framework for interventions across the landscape on conservation issues to promote forest based livelihoods as well as forest products trade.

To **secure long-term funding** for the management of these valuable areas, sustainable financing mechanisms must be explored and developed. These mechanisms must be integrated into the broader conservation strategy of the PAs (including corridors) and contribute to the consolidation of the co-management intervention. Locally negotiated Land Use Plans (LUP) along the corridors and peripheral zone of the parks should serve as reference for a territory-based Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES). PSMNR has developed a REDD+ concept based on council and village based land-use planning for the conservation of forests along major corridors and peripheral zone of the parks. Funds should be invested in carbon friendly and productive agro-forestry systems. In Mt Cameroon National park PSMNR-SWR follows up the creation of the Mt Cameroon Fund which shall receive mainly funding from private donors (eg water bottle companies in SWR).

Socio-political crisis and armed conflict in South West Region

End of 2017, the “Anglophone crisis” morphed into an armed conflict, opposing “Non-State Armed Groups” (NSAGs) and the GoC forces of law and order. The “Ghost towns” and “Lock downs”, periods of one week or more imposed by the armed groups in some localities, have impacted very negatively on the smooth implementation of the Programme, as the movement of staff was limited. In addition, kidnappings, threats and violence perpetrated on some citizens takes place. School closures are enforced through threats of the NSAGs in most of the rural areas. So far, no solution to the conflict has been found. Up to now, it cannot be foreseen how the crisis will continue.

Adaptation of PSMNR-SWR Phase IV to the crisis

Nearly one year after the inception report and one and a half years after the start of phase IV and the continuation of the crisis, it became clear that PSMNR-SWR could not completely achieve in the given timeframe what has been described in the programme proposal and separate agreement. Therefore, in a proposal presented to MINFOF, KfW and the German Government, adaptations to the initial foreseen implementation strategy were proposed until the end of phase IV, foreseen in May 2022. The proposal was approved by PSMNR-SWR steering committee in its technical point in March 2020.

In general, the implementation strategy does not need to be fundamentally changed but needs some adjustments. The following main adjustments need to be realized:

- The already before planned delegation of more responsibilities to local co-management institutions (Village Forest Management Committees, Cluster platforms, Cluster facilitator) in the framework of the collaborative protected area management approach has to be reinforced. Local support organizations, community based organizations and local conservation support staff have to play a stronger role for the implementation of livelihood improvement measures in the peripheral zones and/or co-management activities (conservation support activities inside the protected areas). Through the local co-management institutions PSMNR-SWR is well informed on the current security situation in the different intervention areas. The accessibility of MINFOF staff to most of the areas is up to now either much restricted or impossible.
- One of the major modifications concerns law enforcement. The Conservation Task Force had to be suspended due to setbacks linked to the actual security context. However it is planned to constitute an investigation & intelligence unit, develop collaboration with judiciary services, and to establish a small intervention unit of well trained eco-guards, that will realize short targeted operations in Mt Cameroon National park, using information from the investigation unit.
- In Mt Cameroon and for all the other protected areas, surveillance, monitoring and other park management activities conducted by local conservation support staff, mainly in biodiversity hotspots, as well as engagement of local communities with traditional injunctions shall reduce illegal activities. The engagement of local institutions and local support staff shall contribute to the appropriation of conservation values and at the same time contribute to livelihood improvement.
- With the creation of the Integrated Conservation Education Centre (ICEC), conservation education aimed at a behavioural change towards biodiversity conservation gains a much more important role. ICEC hosted in the Limbe Botanical Garden shall up-scale conservation education and outreach programmes for the local communities in the five protected areas where PSMNR intervenes and also addresses the general public. Target groups of the local communities will be invited to Limbe for weekly conservation education programmes. Outreach programmes and education material developed by ICEC shall be brought into the local communities by the co-management institutions and through local support organizations. Scholarships and vocational training for targeted groups of the protected areas are part of the implementation concept.

The role of the management units for programme implementation at regional level will be reinforced with the recruitment of additional programme support staff. Community development technicians, which are resident in the different areas and can have access to the villages in the current security situation, will be recruited.

